



F-35 Lightning II Program

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VMX-22 RECEIVES FIRST F-35B AIRCRAFT

Marine Operational and Evaluation Squadron 22 received its first F-35B aircraft at Edwards Air Force Base, California for operational testing Oct. 9, 2014.

"VMX-22's mission is to conduct operational testing and evaluation of U.S. Marine Corps' fixed, tiltrotor, and rotary-wing aircraft, Unmanned Aerial Systems, and Marine Air Command and Control Systems, support concept development, and assist in the creation of Marine aviation tactics, techniques and procedures through experimentation and support to tactical demonstrations," said Col. Robert L. Rauenhorst, commanding officer of Marine Operational and Evaluation Squadron 22.

Previously, VMX-22 only consisted of MV-22 and CH-53 aircraft, but the arrival of the F-35B marks the start of VMX-22 fixed wing flight operations. This is the first of four F-35B aircraft that will arrive over the upcoming months at Edwards Air Force Base.

"The addition of the F-35B at VMX-22 will help to develop increased capabilities and interoperability of the Aviation Combat Elements to support the Marine Air/Ground Task Force of the 21st century," Rauenhorst said.

The operational testing will determine how effective and suitable the F-35B aircraft will be in its intended operational environment. The successful completion of the operational testing is required in order for the aircraft to proceed from low-rate initial production into full rate production.

Operational testing will be held at Edwards Air Force Base, Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division China Lake, California; Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada; Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California; Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona; and aboard the USS Wasp.

The F-35B operational test is slated to be complete by 2018 at Edwards Air Force Base and will be continued throughout the life of the F-35 program as major block upgrades are completed.



A F-35B Lightning II with Marine Operational and Test Evaluation Squadron 22 taxis under a canopy aboard Edwards Air Force Base, Calif., Oct. 9. This is the squadron's first F-35 Lightning II.